

TAC MEETING #2 SUMMARY

City of Show Low City Hall
Cougar Conference Room
180 North 9th Street
Show Low, AZ 85901

June 4, 2013

Attendees:

Sarah Allred (by phone), ADOT MPD
Justin Feek, ADOT MPD
Tom Hakenewerth, MV Transit, General Manager
Ed Muder, Show Low, City Manager
Justin Tregaskes, Show Low, Planning & Zoning Director
Joel Weeks, Show Low, Community Services Director
Mark Vest, Northland Pioneer College
Nick Lund, TRACKS
Kevin Kugler, Baker/RBF
Frank Curti, Baker/RBF

Agenda:

- I. Introductions
- II. Summary of Working Paper #1: Existing and Future Conditions
- III. TAC Review and Discussion Existing and Future Conditions
- IV. Roving Community Workshop Debrief
- V. Next Steps/Project Schedule

I. Introductions

Justin Feek, ADOT MPD Project Manager, started the meeting at approximately 1:30 p.m. He made introductory remarks and thanked the attendees for participating in the TAC meeting process.

Justin Feek (ADOT) opened the meeting with introductions and scheduling comments. Mr. Feek noted that TAC Committee members should send comments on Working Paper #1 to Kevin Kugler by June 21st.

Justin Feek then introduced Kevin Kugler with Baker/RBF, as the consultant Project Manager. Mr. Kugler reviewed the agenda for the meeting. He noted that the primary focus of the TAC meeting was to review the transit and trails existing and future conditions presented in Working Paper #1. Mr. Kugler noted that there is an extensive

amount of information to cover since we are reviewing aspects of trails and transit together in one project.

II. Summary of Working Paper #1

III. TAC Review and Discussion of Existing and Future Conditions

Kevin Kugler began by explaining the steps taken in the data collection process that included two separate field reviews for both trails and transit system components. Mr. Kugler noted the various existing studies that were reviewed and asked the TAC if they felt there were any other studies that were missed. The TAC did not note any additional studies for referencing.

Kevin Kugler went on to explain that input from residents and transit/trails users was vital to the success of this study and that extensive efforts were made to solicit input and feedback. An on-board transit survey of existing transit riders was conducted over a 2.5 week period and an electronic trails survey was conducted via Survey Monkey through the ADOT website. Approximately 7,000 postcards were mailed to Show Low residents to inform them of the trails survey and to invite them to participate in the survey process. Mr. Kugler noted that the results of both surveys would be presented later in the presentation.

Kevin Kugler then proceeded to present the various existing condition findings of the study area, including land ownership, land use, circulation and the existing and projected demographics and socioeconomics of each of the White Mountain communities within the study area. Existing vehicle trip data on ADOT roadways and City of Show Low roadways was also presented. Kevin Kugler noted that the crash data provided by ADOT does not specify the particular crash type, i.e., if the crash involved pedestrians or bicyclists. It is clear from the data, however, that the majority of crashes occurred on the ADOT highway facilities in the area. There were a total of 803 crash incidents in the 5-year period, 6 of which included fatalities. Kevin Kugler also noted that the average vehicle trips per day data showed that there were slightly more trips on the segment of the Deuce of Clubs that is east of the SR 260 (White Mountain Road) intersection than the segment of the Deuce of Clubs near Old Linden Road, which came as a bit of a surprise.

Kevin Kugler continued with the review of various demographic and socioeconomic indicators (current and future conditions) for the entire study area that included: population density, age distribution, youth density, elderly density, racial demographics, minority population density, median family income, commuting habits, households without vehicles, and a review of Show Low's top employers and their respective locations. Kevin Kugler reviewed this material and concluded with observations regarding how the various indicators can influence the existing and future proposed transit system.

Justen Tregaskes asked about the median family income graphic and how the City of Show Low was basically divided in half – higher incomes to the west and lower incomes to the east. He suggested that the information doesn't really tell you much since it appears simplistic. Kevin Kugler agreed that yes, the information for median family

income unfortunately isn't broken down to the block level (like other Census data is) by the US Census, and that the information provided is the best level of data we have. He agreed that there is not a tremendous benefit to that particular layer of data and how it may influence transit one way or the other. Kevin Kugler then turned the meeting over to Frank Curti to review the transit system's existing and future conditions.

Frank Curti reviewed the existing operating characteristics of the Four Seasons Connection (FSC) and White Mountain Connection (WMC). Frank Curti then reviewed the operational statistics developed for this study that included vehicles operated in maximum service (VOMS), ridership levels, revenue miles, fare revenue, operating expenses, etc. He explained that the ridership has steadily increased; in fact, it has doubled over the past 5 years. However, ridership for the first 6 months in 2013, ridership on the WMC was down 20% and FSC ridership down 8%. Joel Weeks asked about the reduction in the fare revenue and ridership. The 20% reduction seemed high to him. Tom Hakenewerth responded that he agreed with the consultant findings. He said that lately ridership has been down and he is not exactly sure why. Frank Curti added that the fare revenue reduction is also likely attributable to the fact that WMC ridership is down and the cost per ride on the WMC is higher, but also the elderly and disabled fares are 50% of the full fare cost and this would result in lower total fares even if the ridership levels are up. Tom Hakenewerth agreed that this is likely the case.

Frank Curti reviewed the transit system efficiency and effectiveness statistics, including cost per revenue hour and mile, subsidy per boarding and the farebox recovery ratio. He noted how the system has successfully contained its costs over the last 5 years.

Frank Curti concluded his review of the transit system existing conditions by suggesting that the strengths of the system include broad local support, the system's efficiency and its high productivity. He noted that its weaknesses include on-time performance, equipment issues and reliance on federal funding/lack of state funding.

Frank Curti went on to observe that there were opportunities to expand the system moving forward. These opportunities included greater partnership with other providers (senior center by example) in the area, possible expansion to Springerville and Whiteriver and possible reconfiguration of the routing in order to enhance on-time performance. Challenges moving forward are increased number of wheelchair requests (and how those impact on-time performance) and potential lack of funding. Tom Hakenewerth added that the increase in wheelchair requests and other requests that require a deviation from the fixed route continue to put stress on the systems' ability to maintain its on-time performance.

Frank Curti concluded his overview of the transit component by reviewing a future transit demand estimate. He explained that the "Arkansas model" was a common transit demand estimating methodology. He noted that in 2007, a variation of the Arkansas model was developed for Arizona and was utilized for this analysis. Frank Curti went on to note the advantages and shortcomings of this model as it relates to the analysis of the FSC and WMC systems. He concluded by noting that the FSC and WMC transit systems were performing well above the demand threshold identified by the model.

Kevin Kugler then provided an overview of the existing and planned trails component of the discussion. He first explained the differences between various types of pedestrian trails and bikeways, utilizing graphics in the PowerPoint to support the discussion. Justen Tregaskes asked for clarification on the difference between shared use trails and multiuse trails. Kevin Kugler explained that shared use trails are hard surfaced trails that are 10-14 feet in width that accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, wheelchairs, skaters, etc. Higher usage shared use paths have striping to designate/separate pedestrians from bicyclists. Multiuse trails, on the other hand, are trails with native tread surfaces that are usually 4-6 feet in width, such as many USFS trails in the area or the trail around Fool Hollow Lake. Justen Tregaskes then made reference to the draft map and suggested a couple of likely adjustments based on these descriptions.

Kevin Kugler continued with a review of the various US Forest Service trails in Show Low and surrounding White Mountains area. He noted that Show Low is fortunate to be home to some fantastic USFS trails such as the Buena Vista Trail, which has a lot of topographic relief in its 10 mile loop as well as the 15.5 mile loop Los Caballos trail. The Chihuahua Pine Connector is 4.2 miles long and connects the two aforementioned USFS trails that includes a grade separated crossing on US 60 just outside the city limits.

Kevin Kugler went on to describe other notable Show Low trails including the Show Low Bluff trail, the Summit Trail and trail system in Show Low City Park. Nick Lund offered some added clarification on the work TRACKS has conducted on the Show Low Bluff Trail and potential efforts to work with the community developer to build out the ultimate loop trail. The group also discussed the planned Show Low Timber Mesa trail that has “been on the books” since the mid-1980’s, and how needed improvements to the White Mountain Road/Show Low Lake Rd. intersection are necessary to accommodate potential equestrian users. The group also noted that equestrian users would likely not find this connection very desirable, and therefore, it would be seldom used by equestrians.

Kevin Kugler then provided an overview of the roadway inventory of Show Low city streets that was conducted. The map was referenced for this review of the existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities on more than 12 of the “major” roadways in Show Low. Justen Tregaskes wanted to focus on sidewalk gaps that were identified, and how certain gaps were important to identify for this study. He made reference to three sidewalk closures that were particularly important to close. Kevin Kugler thanked the TAC for their input.

Kevin Kugler then began to review the findings from the transit survey that was conducted. He said that the on-board survey was conducted over a period of 2.5 weeks and he thanked Tom and MV Transportation for their cooperation in conducting the survey. Kevin Kugler noted that 15 additional transit surveys were successfully conducted at the May 4th Roving Workshop with transit users at the Show Low Lake Road Transit Station. Overall, the input was tremendous as there were 122 transit survey responses received.

Kevin Kugler made numerous observations about the transit survey findings (please see attached presentation for additional reference). He summarized that the majority of transit users surveyed used the transit system for work and that they were full time employees. Nearly 2/3 of all riders do not own a vehicle that could have been used instead of the bus. Tom Hakenewerth added that what is also notable is the fact that over 80% of FSC users walked to the bus stop and 2/3 said there is a need for more public transit in Show Low and Pinetop-Lakeside, and how these two facts really underscore the need and the focus of this study linking trails and transit connectivity.

Kevin Kugler then reviewed the findings of the trails survey that was conducted. He reminded the group that a flyer was included in the Show Low water utility bills mailed to over 7,000 Show Low area households to inform them of the survey taken electronically on the ADOT website. Several trails surveys were also completed at the Roving Mobile Workshop. In all, a total of 69 trails surveys were completed. He noted that there were 23 questions in the trails survey and there is a lot of data to cover in the findings.

Kevin Kugler summarized that some of the more relevant findings included the fact that over 80% of the responders were between the ages of 41-60 years old, 2/3 of the respondents said they use paths or trails 1-4 days per week, the average length for a typical trip was over 2 miles and that 83% of respondents said they use trails for recreation purposes. He went on to summarize that 65% of the respondents said the reason they do not walk, jog or run on Show Low trails is the lack of available trail infrastructure. There were fewer respondents that bicycled. 38% of bicyclists responding said they primarily use paved shoulders along city streets the most. The vast majority of bicyclists do so for recreation purposes, while 3% of respondents said they bicycle to work. Facilities most bicyclists would prefer to see in the future are an expanded system of off-street pathways, more sidewalks near commercial centers and bicycle lanes on city/county roadways.

IV. Roving Mobile Workshop Debrief

Kevin Kugler reviewed the results of the May 4, 2013 Roving Mobile Workshop. He reminded the TAC that the workshop was held in conjunction with the City of Show Low 60th Anniversary Celebration that included a large picnic, rides, games and vendors gathered at the Show Low City Park. The workshop was conducted from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm at three locations – the Show Low City Park, Meadow Trailhead and the Show Low Lake Road Transit Center. Each location utilized a FSC bus in which presentation boards were displayed on the side of the bus.

Kevin Kugler expressed his thanks to Joel Weeks and Justen Tregaskes for their assistance in facilitating the workshop which turned out to be a tremendous success. He said the exposure at the 60th Anniversary Celebration in particular was great for the project. Additional surveys were completed, people were genuinely interested in the project and that there were over 96 individuals who attended the workshop over the three locations. Kevin Kugler noted that this turnout was far greater than the likely turnout at a typical open house meeting held during a weeknight.

V. Next Steps/Project Schedule

Mr. Kugler reminded the TAC of the next project steps that include drafting Working Paper #2 -Trails and Transit Deficiencies. He reminded the TAC that they had until June 21st to provide any additional comments on Working Paper #1. Kevin Kugler went on to note that after Working Paper #2 is completed, it will be distributed to the TAC for their review and the next TAC meeting would be schedule for some time in September to review the contents of Working Paper #2 and to review preliminary materials regarding project evaluation criteria and alternative projects. A second community meeting was likely going to be scheduled for some time in November to review and prioritize alternative transit and trails projects.

The meeting concluded at approximately 3:30 as Justin Feek thanked the group for attending.